

Foreword | Healthcare and Life Sciences

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Welcome to the first edition of Law Update for 2022. The New Year brings fresh opportunity and renewed optimism that we can build on the momentum set in 2021, and continue on a positive trajectory. As a legal community, we should ensure we face 2022 with the same rigour and enthusiasm that enabled us to collaborate, internally and externally, to continue servicing our clients. I believe the legal sector will continue to be challenged this year, and the same can be said for the wider business community, however, I have no doubt we will rise to the challenge.

A sector that is going to, once again, be vital this year will be healthcare. In the wake of the pandemic, our reliance on this sector has grown 10-fold. Regionally our governments and healthcare providers have done a great job rolling out vaccines to help the population tackle COVID-19 and its subsequent variants. The United Arab Emirates features at the top of indexes monitoring the number of doses administered, which is an outstanding achievement and something that our healthcare system and its professionals should be proud of.

Outside of the pandemic, governments across the region have had a long-standing focus on expanding and upgrading healthcare systems, and developing robust world-class healthcare infrastructure. The sector is a vital pillar in diversifying regional economies, both locally and as a medical tourism hub. Therefore, there continues to be a drive to develop infrastructure and adapt state-of-the-art technologies.

Healthcare in the Middle East and North Africa is a major priority and it is on an upward curve. The sectors progress is being underpinned by healthcare authorities across the region implementing frameworks and regulations that provide structure and accountability. Within this issue of Law Update, our lawyers take you through the key healthcare regulatory developments from across the region, and cover topics such as stem cell research in Bahrain, clinical research law, and Saudi medical device and pharmaceutical laws.

There is more in this packed edition; we have several general articles covering some of the most pertinent developments from across the region, such as insights into the significant changes to the UAE labour Law. There are two articles on Iraq covering partnerships and private security legislation. There is also a commentary on how COVID-19 disruption may be grounds for termination of a lease agreement. There are many more subject areas covered that I am sure, you will enjoy reading.

In the final section of this edition, we share a round-up of real-life judgments that provide context to the legal landscape across the region.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and should you have any comments or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any of the lawyers who have contributed.